

Theology vol 61.

THE
CHARACTER
OF THE
TIMES
DELINEATED.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I. Containing a DESCRIPTION of the
most notorious Impieties, *viz.*

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| 2. Perjury. | |
| 3. Want of Common Honesty. | 5. Infidelity and Atheism. |

PART II. Containing a further CHARACTER of the
TIMES, and of the State of *Religion* amongst us.

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Design'd for the Use of those who mourn in secret for the
Iniquities of the Nation, and are convinc'd by sad Expe-
rience, that *Private Vices* are *Publick* and *Real Mischief*s.

Perilous Times shall come, 2 Tim. iii. 1.

L O N D O N :

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CHAPTER

TITLE

DESCRIPTION

DATE

PART



PART



THE
CHARACTER
OF THE
TIMES Delineated.



WHILE the Press is crouded, and our Shops cramm'd with Books and Pamphlets full of *deadly Poison*; some to corrupt, others to abolish and utterly destroy, the small Remains of *Religion* and *Virtue*, that are left amongst us; it might well be expected that some serious Hand should furnish us with a seasonable Antidote against so many invenomed *Arrows that fly by Day*, against *the Pestilence that walketh in Darkness*, and *the Sickness that destroyeth in the Noon-Day*. Whatever Opposition hath hitherto appear'd to these bold Attacks upon our Principles, tho' it may seem to make

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some Stand against the Enemy, yet, if we judge by the Success, it is too plain, that this is not the most *proper* and *effectual* Method for repelling this general Corruption: The Medicine is not proportion'd to the Cause; the Disease encreases rather than abates.

Indeed the Distemper has already spread itself so far, as to become almost *Epidemical*; and if a mistaken *Lenity* has hitherto treated so desperate a Case, rather after the Example of old *Eli*, than with the Spirit and Zeal of *Elias*, or *John* the *Baptist*, there seems but one Way left to prevent the *Whole* from Ruin, and that is *Repentance*. It is our Blessed Lord's Prescription, and must be the most Salutary of any; Yea, the only One, that can preserve us from a total Corruption and Apostacy, and from the dire Consequences of it, a Visitation of Divine Vengeance, as general as the Cause.—But what Steps are *yet* taken for applying, or even recommending, this sovereign Remedy?

I have indeed seen a little *Treatise upon LENT*, and another call'd a *Penitential Office, with Prayers and Intercessions for our Church and Nation*. Both which seem calculated and design'd to stir up the Spirit of *Repentance* amongst us; the First, as a *Help* to such as are *Penitent*, and awaken'd to a Sense of
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of our common *Danger* ; the Other, to assist the *Devotions* of those who *mourn in private* for the *Wickedness* of the Times, and tremble at the Prospect of impending *Judgments*.— But *private* Compositions, and *private* Examples, extend their Influence but a little Way. Nothing less than *publick* Power can stem a Torrent of *publick* Iniquity. This is an *Evil* which none but a *Royal Hand* can cure.

Had it pleased those who are invested with the proper *Authority* for so doing ; had the Writers on the part of Religion thought fit to *call us* to a *general* Repentance and *publick* Humiliation, rather than leave the Issue to Argument and doubtful Disputation, there would be no need for such private anonymous Essays to come abroad. But when we are left only to *mourn in secret*, and have at the same time too much Cause to fear this *retired* Humiliation will not prove *sufficient* to avert the Stroke of Divine Vengeance, 'tis *every Christian's* Business, as well as Interest, to offer his helping Hand. And if among our *Clergy* there be found *Apostates* and *Traytors* to their Order, to their Saviour and their God, it must be high Time for every Man, without Distinction, *Laity* as well as *Clergy*, to assert the Cause of our Church and the common Salvation. The *Danger* is universal, the *Concern* should

be so too : And those who cannot by their Tongues or their Pens, defend the common Interests of Religion, may at least do it by their Lives and Examples, their Prayers and their Tears. They may at least *repent* of their own Sins, and *intercede* for those of *others*.

But as we cannot repent effectually of our own Sins without a previous Knowledge and Examination of their particular *Kinds*, and the *Degrees of Guilt*, so is it as requisite that he, who intercedes for *National Crimes*, should (as the little Book last mentioned very properly recommends, *p. 12.*) endeavour to gain a competent Knowledge of the *reigning Iniquities of the Age* we live in.— I have therefore (and for *this* Reason only) thought it would be a useful Supplement to the said Book, to give some general *Description* and *Character* of our present Times, that so, by a serious Review thereof, the Mind of every Reader being work'd up to a *hearty Abhorrence*, as well as *Fear*, may so *confess* their own Sins, and the Sins of the Nation, and so *repent*, as effectually to prevail with God for Mercy, and a *Lengthning*, if it may be, of our *Prosperity*.



P A R T I.

Of Notorious Impieties.

O the End then we may gain a competent Knowledge of the sad Estate of these Times with respect to *Morality* and *Religion*, and a due Apprehension of the Peril, to which our Church and Nation stand expos'd, from the just Vengeance of an Incens'd Deity; let us first take a View of those Crimes of *greatest Enormity* which reign amongst us, and chiefly *distinguish* this profligate Age, and then consider the too general Corruption which is found among those who *profess Religion*, and as *yet* are Christians.

1. Then, We discover not only *common* Vices and Immoralities surpassing any Age or Nation that we read of, and the very Heathens, who knew not God, but every Species of Vice *improved* to so monstrous a Size, so daring and bare-faced, as *publickly* to triumph in our Streets, and to bid Defiance to the Laws both of God and Man :
while

while *Virtue*, as well as *Piety*, is turned out of *Fashion*, banished from the pretendedly *Welbred* Part of the World, to skulk and conceal itself in Holes and Corners.

Common Swearing and Cursing. How common and universal is the Profanation of God's most Holy Name! how general the Custom of *Vain Swearing and Cursing*! So that from the gray Hairs to the Child that has but just learn'd to speak, we hear them in our Streets, where-ever we go, venting aloud most horrid Oaths and Imprecations. Nor are they content to blaspheme the God that made them, and the Saviour that redeem'd them, but, with a kind of horrible Importunity, call and solicit for that Damnation on *themselves*, their *Souls* and their *Blood* or Families, which is the very Penalty of the Law they transgress.

Were this the only *reigning* Sin amongst us, and thus *suffer'd* to reign, it is a sufficient Provocation to Almighty God, to pour down upon us the Phials of his Wrath.—
For *because of Swearing the Land mourneth*; and, *he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain*.

Perjury. But, alas! What shall we say, when even *Perjury* and False Swearing is grown so very common, as almost

most to be thought a *Venial Sin*. The imposing of so many publick Oaths, and Oaths of Office, instead of being a Security of Mens Integrity or Allegiance (as it was intended to be) has rather prov'd a cruel *Snare* to the Conscience, and almost destroy'd all *Reverence* for such sacred Obligations; yea, seems to set Men more loose to their Engagements, than if their Souls had not been bound by any Oath at all.—But *God is not mocked*; for *the Curse shall enter into the House of him that sweareth falsely by my Name, and it shall remain in the midst of his House, and shall consume it, with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof*, Zach. v. 4.

If the *Commonness* of imposing publick Oaths in this Country prove too often a Snare to the Conscience, the want of sufficient *Solemnity* in the *administring* thereof, is no less a Means of betraying many into *Perjury*; who, if the Oath were tendred to them in a more grave and *reverent* Manner, would probably be aw'd into a holy Fear of the Divine Presence, and a due Veneration for so sacred an Action. *

* An *English* Knight of the Post coming into a Court of Justice in *Scotland*, and intending to take a false Oath, was so daunted at the *Solemnity* us'd by the *Judges* and whole Court while the Oath was tendring to him, that his Conscience smote him, his Heart fail'd, and he shrunk away out of Court.

And

Want of Com-
mon Honesty.

And where so little Regard
is had to the most solemn Ties
of Conscience, what Wonder is it, that all
Honesty and *Common Justice in Dealings*
should become so rare, as hardly to be found
amongst us? I cannot describe it better, nor
more truly, than in the Words of the Pro-
phet, *Isa. xlix. &c.*—" Our Hands are de-
" filed with Blood, and our Fingers with
" Iniquity ; our Lips have spoken Lyes,
" and our Tongues muttered Perverseness.
" None calleth for Justice, nor any pleadeth
" for Truth ; they trust in Vanity, and speak
" Lyes ; they conceive Mischief, and bring
" forth Iniquity ; they hatch Cockatrice
" Eggs, and weave the Spider's Web. He
" that eateth of their Eggs, dieth ; and that
" which is crushed, breaketh out into a
" Viper. Their Feet run to Evil, and they
" make haste to shed innocent Blood. Their
" Thoughts are Thoughts of Iniquity.
" Wasting and Destruction are in their
" Paths ; whosoever goeth therein, shall not
" know Peace. Therefore is Judgment far
" from us, neither doth Justice overtake us.
" We wait for Light, but behold Obscu-
" rity ; for Brightness, but we walk in
" Darkness. We grope for the Wall like
" the Blind, and we grope as if we had no
" Eyes ; we stumble at Noon-day, as in
" the Night ; we are in desolate Places, as
" dead

“ dead Men. We roar all like Bears, and
 “ mourn fore like Doves. We look for
 “ Judgment, but there is none ; for Salva-
 “ tion, but it is far from us.

Such are our Manners, such the deplorable State of Corruption, which runs thro’ all Conditions and Professions of Men amongst us, in all our *Dealings*, in all *Traffick*, all *Business* and *Employments* both publick and private ; so that “ Judgment is turned away
 “ backward, and Justice standeth afar off ;
 “ for Truth is fallen in the Streets, and
 “ Equity cannot enter : Yea, Truth faileth ;
 “ and he that departeth from Evil, maketh
 “ himself a Prey : And the Lord saw it, and
 “ it displeased him, that there was no Judgment,” — no Honour or Honesty to be found. — Yet this is not all : as if *private Fraud* were too puny and mean a Crime, and devouring Widows Houses too insipid a Morfel for some Maws, we have lived to see whole Kingdoms fall a Sacrifice to Avarice, and the Tears of many Thousands, Widows and Orphans, running down their Cheeks, without Relief, without Pity or Remorse.

And lest the *Native* Honour and antient *British* Probity should recover itself, after the Waste made in our Consciences by the late *Stock-jobbing* Schemes, the grand Enemy of Virtue employs two of his *choicest Pens* to
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prevent it ; the one to dress up the *blackest Villany*, in a plausible Air of *Heroism* and *Gallantry* ; not only to spirit up all the most abandoned Wretches to *Rapine* and *Plunder*, but that our very Children and Servants, our Wives and Daughters, might no longer retain the least Abhorrence of *Thieving*, *Whoring* and *Villany*, nor be restrain'd any more by the old musty Rules of *Honour* or *Shame*. — The other, with a bolder Stroke, openly attacks *Virtue* itself, degrades her from the Dignity she had ever held in the World till *then*, in the unanimous Vogue of all Mankind ; and with unparallel'd *Impudence* sets up *Vice* as preferable to her, stripping her of those Honours, which till *now* she had ever enjoy'd, even amongst the most barbarous Nations. — But,

*Had the Bard liv'd in wise Augustus's Days,
His Lot had been a Halter, not the Bays :
And, if G O D - M A N Vice to abolish came,
Who Vice commends, M A N - D E V I L be his
Name.*

Drunkenness
and Profane
Clubs.

To add *Drunkenness* to Thirst,
is too vulgar and too innocent a
Fault *now-a-days*, except their
Cups be seasoned with *Blasphemy* and *Pro-
faneness*, and such impious, audacious Ri-
baldry against the sacred Mysteries of our
holy Religion, as is too shocking to relate :
Yea,


Yea, some we have heard of, who, from inverting our *Litany*, and saying, as it were, their Prayers *backwards*, by horrid Imprecations for Plague, Pestilence and Famine on the reverend Orders of our Church, have commenced such Heroes in Impiety, as to pay their Compliment to the very *Devil*, admit him of their Hellish *Club*, and even *drink his Health*. — These Things we have with Horror and Amazement heard of; O that we had also heard of Examples suitable to such prodigious Crimes! But where is our *Moses*, to stand in the Gap? Where a *Phineas*, to execute Judgment, *that so the Plague may be stay'd?*

And yet how small a Part are these of the Abominations which are yet behind, to fill up the Measure of our Iniquities! *Infidelity*, once a Vice in *Practice* only, and that amongst the most heedless and *unthinking Libertines*, is now advanced into Speculation, and made the Character of our most *thinking* People. Even *Atheism* itself, which all former, yea, the most dark Ages, have universally *abhorr'd*, as the most monstrous of all Sins; so that it never durst shew its Head in *publick*; and in *David's* Time pass'd no farther than a *Thought of the Heart*, and that too amongst *Fools*, is now receiv'd and caref'd by Men

Infidelity and
Atheism.

of Gravity and Character, and dress'd up with all the Ornaments of Wit and Learning; and not only entertain'd in Conversation and private Cabals, but hath been Weekly sent abroad over all the Nation to make Profelytes for *Satan*, and destroy all the little Remains of that holy Faith, which was once deliver'd to the Saints, and planted amongst us. And the quick Sale, the repeated Editions, the eager Call for such *Antichristian* Books and Pamphlets, is too evident a Proof of the fatal Success they meet with. *And shall not God visit for these Things? Will not his Soul be avenged of such a Nation as this? —* His Power in Government, his Authority in the Church, has been long controverted and impugned; the Divinity of his Blessed Son denied; his Miracles blasphemed and ridiculed; there wanted nothing to finish the hideous Monster, but the Denial of his very Being, and arraigning the Truth of his Word. — Neither is this done in a Corner, nor are the Parties unknown, who combine in carrying on this War against Heaven! The mighty Champions are not afraid to appear, who come to defy the Armies of the Living God: We know them, and who are their Abettors. In *Life* they triumph, not only with Impunity, but Favour and Applause: and in *Death* are crown'd with Panegyrick and Praise.

Praise. * And what Pains is taken, what Diligence, what Zeal employ'd, to propagate these accursed Tares, and promote the *Kingdom of Darkneſs*! What Confederacies form'd, what Consultations held, what Schemes concerted, for the utter Subverſion of our Holy Church, and the Religion ſhe profeſſes? We ſee what Parts and Provinces are ſeverally aſſigned to theſe *Infernal Miſſionaries*, how ſome are engaged in attacking her *Ceremonies*, and *Power*, ſome her *Orders* and *Sacraments*, and others her very *Being* and *Conſtitution*; ſome by Stratagem ſeeking to undermine her *Foundations*, others, more daring, fighting againſt her [*aperto Marte*] in the open Field; and oh! that ſome of her very Clergy, ſome of her own Sons, were not of this unhappy Number! Others, whom we may challenge the moſt † barbarous Antiquity, all the Nations and Ages of the World to parallel, have liſted themſelves profeſſedly to declaim *againſt all Virtue*, and to *applaud Vice*; they are not aſhamed to extol and recommend *Lewdneſs*, to defend *Sacrilege*, and patronize *Murther*,

* See the State of Letters for July, 1730.  *Scabunt mutuo muti.*

† *Nulla fuit unquam* (ſaid * *Eraſmus*) *tam Craſſa Faſtio Philoſophiæ, quæ docuerit Pecuniam Hominem reddere Felicem: nulla tam Impudens, quæ in vulgaribus iſtis Honoribus aut Voluptatibus Finem Boni conſtituerit.*—But we have lived to ſee ſuch *ſtupid* and *impudent* Philoſophers, as to be unworthy the very Title of *Minute*.

* *Adbort. ad Chriſtianæ Philoſ. Studium.*

even

even the Murther of Sovereign Princes, striving with all their Might to confound all Notions of *Virtue* and *Vice*, and, if possible, to invert the very Nature of *Good* and *Evil*.

Many other Crimes, of a most horrible and monstrous kind, are found amongst us, such as *Rapes*, *Incest*, *Sodomy*, open and notorious *Profanation of the Lord's Day*, by *Gaming*, &c. which falling under the Cognizance of the Civil Magistrate, are punishable by the Laws of the Land; and, with many other of our most reigning Vices, might be suppressed, were those Laws put vigorously in Execution. But the Impieties of the *deepest* Die, not meeting with the Recompence of Reward they justly deserve, but rather the Benefit of a Toleration, thro' the unhappy and too licentious Liberty of the Press, or the pretended Want of *sufficient* Laws, * or rather, the *real* Want of *Zeal*, * and a supine Remissness of *Discipline*, do in such Impunity, carry the surer and more certain Omens of Divine Vengeance ready to break upon us.—*It is Time for Thee, Lord, to lay to THINE Hand, for THEY have destroy'd thy Law.* Psal. cxix.—Of the Committers, (I had almost said, the *Permitters*) of such Crimes, we may say in the

* The Act of 9 and 10 Will. III. for suppressing *Blasphemy* and *Profaneness*, which I am credibly inform'd hath never yet been put in Execution, is a standing Monument that the *Defect* is rather in our *Zeal*, than in our *Laws*.

Words of Moses.—*These have corrupted themselves, their Spot is not the Spot of His Children; they are a froward Generation; Children in whom is NO FAITH. They are a Nation void of Counsel, neither is there Understanding in them. Deut. xxxii.*

THESE, O Lord most Holy, O God most Mighty, O Holy and most Merciful Saviour, Thou most worthy Judge Eternal, these are the *Tokens* which distinguish our *present Times*; these the *Crimes*, which, with their hundred Hands, while they seek to pull *Thee* down from thy Throne, are indeed drawing down thy *Judgments* upon our guilty Heads; nor can we expect to escape the Vengeance of Heaven, except our *Repentance* and *Humiliation* be as publick and exemplary as our Iniquities have been notoriously *provoking*. But, alas! who is there amongst us that layeth these Things to Heart, that trembleth at thy Word, that stirreth himself up to take hold of thy Strength, that he may make Peace with Thee? Have we not rather stiffen'd our Necks, despised thy Laws, and refus'd to hear? When Thou calledst to Weeping, and to Mourning, and to girding with Sackcloth, behold Joy and Gladness, slaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Flesh and drinking Wine. We have not returned to the Lord
God,

God, from whom we have deeply revolted : we have not forsaken *any* of our evil Ways, by which we have provok'd thy sorest Displeasure ; but our Transgressions are rather *multiplied* before thee, every Year producing some *new*, and before *unheard* of Impiety amongst us ; so that our Sins testify against us, our Transgressions are still with us, adding still more and more to our Loads of Guilt : And as for our Iniquities, we know them ; yet have we not been afraid of thy Judgments. — We cannot plead *Ignorance* in Extenuation of our Guilt : Our Sins are too flagrant to bear, or even pretend to, an *Excuse* ; but rather in Defiance of those *Woes* thou hast denounced against them, we go on to draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and sin as it were with a Cart-rope : Yea, we are not afraid to challenge thy Vengeance to make Speed, and to hasten thy Work, that we may see it. We are not ashamed to call Evil Good, and Good Evil, to put Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes, to put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter. — We pride ourselves in our own Wisdom, and are too prudent in our own Sight, to learn the Wisdom which is from above. We value ourselves that we are mighty to drink Wine, and Men of Strength to mingle Strong Drink. We impiously justify the Wicked for Reward, and take
away

away the Righteousness of the Righteous from him. Therefore, *as the Fire devoureth the Stubble, and the Flame consumeth the Chaff*, so may we expect, that *our Root shall be as Rottenness, and our Blossom go up as Dust*, because we have *cast away the Law of the Lord of Hosts*, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel. Yea, ungodly Men are risen up amongst us, who not only *despise and neglect* thy holy Word, not only *pervert and wrest* it to support the most pernicious Errors, and even to overthrow the whole System of the Christian Religion, and our holy Faith in thy Blessed Son's Divinity, which is the Rock and Foundation whereon it is built; but have the Boldness to attack the very *Canon of Scripture*, and with all the Sophistry of infernal Wit and Malice to dispute, explode, and even deride the sacred Truths contain'd therein. This Spirit of Profaneness is gone forth *as a Plague*; it spreads its Infection far and wide; both High and Low, Rich and Poor, our very Children and Servants are seized with the deadly Contagion. — O God! to what Times are we reserved! O God! who can hear these Things without *Horror and Amazement*, that has the least Spark of *Piety* remaining? — *Horror*, at Sins of so enormous a Size; *Amazement* and Wonder, that we yet are not as *Sodom and Gomorrah*: *Horror*, to see Men, even in a Christian

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Country,

Country, furpassing the very *Devils* * in Blasphemy and Profaneness: *Amazement*, to see Thee so patient and forbearing? — What shall we say, or whither shall we turn, seeing we have forsaken Thee, and seem, even by the very Indulgence thou hast hitherto shewn, to be forsaken of thee? So that *Mercy* itself is become a *Judgment*, and we seem to be *given up*, as in a desperate Case, to the *Power*, as well as *Guilt*, of the most abandoned Crimes. — *For why should we be stricken any more, the whole Head is sick, and the whole Heart faint: from the Sole of the Foot even to the Head, there is no Soundness in it, but Wounds and Bruises and putrifying Sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with Ointment,* Isa. i.

But, O Lord! is there not a *Remnant*, a small Remnant among us, *that fear thy Name*, that *mourn and sigh* for all these Abominations? and wilt thou destroy the Righteous with the Wicked? That, O Lord, be far from thee. Is not thy CHURCH amongst

* See Mar. i. 24. &c. — The Devil confessed our Lord to be *the Holy One*; but the PERVERTERS of *Scripture Doctrine* deny him to be *Good*; and no wonder their Disciples should improve that *Socinian Negative* into a more blasphemous Affirmation, that the Holy *Jesus* was a downright *Impostor*, and the *worst of Men*. The horrible Tenets of *Wool.* and others are but the necessary Deductions from such *Heretical Positions*.

us, in herself a most pure, holy and unspotted Church? a *Church!* that *abhors* all these Abominations, either in Faith or Practice, which the *Hereticks* and *Atheists* of the Age so industriously spread amongst us? A *Church!* that is so implacably hated by these her Enemies at home, as well as her Adversaries without, for her perfect Purity of *Doctrine*, and Orthodoxy of *Faith*: A *Church!* most zealously tenacious of the Divinity of her ever-blessed Head, and *thus* persecuted for *his very Sake*, suffering *with* him, and *for* him. And carest thou not that it perish? Or is thy Hand shorten'd, that it cannot save? "Where is thy Zeal and thy
 " Strength, the founding of thy Bowels and
 " of thy Mercies towards us? Are they re-
 " strain'd? doubtless thou art Our Father,
 " Our Redeemer, thy Name is from ever-
 " lasting; we are thine; thou never bear-
 " est Rule over them; they are not called
 " by thy Name. O be not wroth very sore,
 " neither remember Iniquity for ever. Be-
 " hold! see! we beseech thee, and spare
 " thy People, the Tribe of thine Inheri-
 " tance." — O spare thy Church, and all that love her, for thy Mercy sake in Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The Lamentation of St. Augustine before the
Sacking of Hippo by the Goths.*

Ante oculos tuos, Domine, &c.

BEfore thine Eyes, O Lord, we exhibit the Particular of our Crimes, and with it the Miseries those Crimes have brought on us.

If we set the Evil we have done against the Evils we suffer, how short is what we endure of the Punishment we deserve !

How heavy is the Guilt we have incurred : how light the Chastening we have hitherto sustained !

We feel the Smart of thy Scourge, yet remain incorrigible as ever in our Sins.

Our Weakness shrinks under the Sharpness of thy Correction, but our Perverseness is still the same.

Our Conscience is racked and tortured with Guilt, our Neck is yet too stiff to bend.

Our Life pines away in Sorrow, in Practice is not reformed.

If thou spare, we are not amended ; if thou chastise, we are not able to endure.

Under thy Rod we acknowledge our Faults ; when the Visitation is over, we forget all we feared,

If thou lift up thy Hand, we are full of our Promises ; if thou lay by the Sword, we regard not to pay them.

If thou strike, we cry out aloud to spare ; if thou spare, we provoke thee again to strike.

Lo, guilty we plead, and cannot but confess ; and perish we must, except thou forgive.

Grant us, O Father, the Petitions we ask, tho' unworthy to receive ; yet this Being thou hast given us, that so it might be in our Power to become thy Petitioners, thro' Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*



PART



P A R T II.

A further Character of the Times, and of the State of Religion amongst us.



FROM the *publick* and more *notorious* Scenes of *Immorality* and *Profaneness*, we turn our Eyes to take a View of the State of *Virtue* and *Religion* amongst us, what shall we find even here, but *Darkness* and *Disorder*? — Alas! the very *Foundations of the Earth* are out of *Course*.

Of true Christians, the Number small.

Wherefore passing by all who are *out* of the Pale of the Church, all that *separate* from us, either thro' *Principle* or *Prejudice*, namely, the *Dissenter* of every kind on one hand, the *Infidel* and *Irreligious* on the other, still the Residue we might well hope and expect, under the Favour and Protection of a *legal Establishment*, as well as for the intrinsic *Excellence* and infinite *Importance* of the Truths they profess; we might, I say, with Reason

Reason expect the Pious and *Orthodox* would far out-number all the *Seets* and opposite Parties whatsoever. But, alas! it is not so with us: for if we take our Estimate from the Congregations that frequent our Churches (and this seems the truest Way of computing *Christ's* Servants) if we observe who they are, that attend his House and Service, I fear they will fall vastly short in *Number* of those *Absentees*, who neglect, or apostatize from our Communion, even tho' we should make our Review on the *Sundays*, and most *publick* Days of assembling together. But, if from *these* we strike off all that come for *Fashion* or Formality on the *Sundays*, and certain high Festivals, and reckon such only, as for *pure Devotion* attend the publick Worship at *other* Seasons and on the *ordinary Days* of the Week; or count such, as stay to receive the Holy *Eucharist* on the Days appointed for it, how small, how very small a Number will the Flock of Christ be reduc'd to! A mere Army of *Gideon*, — not one in ten left! And, alas! for those who are most constant at the *publick Prayers* and *Sacraments*, we cannot say, nor does it appear by their Lives and Conversations, that they are *all* Saints, that they have *all* the *Power of Godliness*, as well as the *Form*.

But

Irreverent
Behaviour
in Church.

But surely nothing can give a more just and melancholy Idea of the deplorable Decay of Piety and Devotion, nothing more truly and sadly express our real Character, as to *Piety*, than the general *Misbehaviour* of our Congregations during the Time of Divine Service. Whoever compares our common Deportment in Church with the *Rubricks* of our Liturgy and the *Canons* of our Church, must be convinc'd, that the far *greater* Number of the People are either shamefully ignorant of the *Rule*, or more shamefully negligent of that *Order* and *Unity* of *Gesture* and *Behaviour* which it prescribes. So that in Effect our Congregations are for the most part rather an Assembly of *Non-Conformists* and Dissenters, than obedient and genuine Members of the *Church of England*; a disorderly Multitude, rather than a regular Society; *Strangers* at least, if not profess'd *Enemies*, to the *Act of Uniformity*, by which our Church is establish'd, and her Ceremonies enjoyn'd: openly violating one of the very chief of all our Laws, as well as all Decency and Discipline, as if they came thither on purpose to affront the most High God *in his own House*, to insult the Church's Authority, and shew their Contempt of all Laws Human and Divine.

I cannot

I cannot here omit another scandalous Profanation, which is grown universal, the suffering Dogs to come into our Churches; yea, to stay there during the very Time of administering the Holy Communion: surely there are Laws of the Church and proper Officers appointed to prevent this Abomination; and shall Beasts be admitted into the Sanctuaries? Shall Dogs be allow'd a Toleration? The Voice of Nature in all Nations has pronounced a Dog an unclean and profane Animal. The Proverb couples it with the Serpent (*Cane pejus & Angue*) to express a more than ordinary Detestation; and it was so noted a Custom in antient Times to keep Dogs out of Temples and Churches, that the very Scripture, to denote the Exclusion of ungodly Men out of the Heavenly Jerusalem, expresses it by this Hieroglyphical Saying, — *Without are Dogs*, Rev. xxii. 15. and joins them with *Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Adulterers, and Idolaters, &c.* — This is the Company the Divine Oracle affords them with. Can it then be fit to let those filthy Creatures into the Assemblies of Christians, into that House of God on Earth, which is consecrated to his Service, and should both in its Use and Sanctity, resemble his House in Heaven? 'Tis monstrous, 'tis amazing, that it should be suffer'd; and nothing can account for so palpable an Indecency,

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decency, but the general Indolence and Spirit of Indifference in sacred Things, which possesses both Priest and People.

Irreverence
in reading,
and joining
in the Com-
mon Prayer.

The Time would fail me, should we go thro' all the Defects, where- with the *Beauty* of our *Publick Service* is blemish'd and deform'd.

The very *Liturgy* and *Form* itself, than which nothing can be more excellent and compleat, is too often expos'd to Contempt, or made of no Effect, by the supine and indevout Performance of him that *officiates*. The cold and lukewarm *Responses* made by some, by others none; the silent or lifeless *Amens*, which in the first Ages of Christianity were pronounced like a Peal of Thunder; the settled *Inattention*, which we cannot but observe in many, to the *reading of the Scriptures*; and above all, the shameless Pratings and Whisperings of others, even of Persons pretending to Politeness of Manners and good Breeding, while the Great GOD is speaking to them in those divine *Lessons*, which the Church has chosen with such admirable *Propriety* for their Instruction, are such Aggravations of the common and almost universal Neglect of *Uniformity*, as well as Piety; that we cannot but justly apprehend the Divine Vengeance is ready to break forth on such a People as this, and to remove our Candlestick from us. How can

we

we expect from God a much longer Continuance of his Church to us, which is no less slighted and despised by her own Children and Friends, than she is mortally hated by her professed Adversaries?

If next we visit the *Families* of those who profess to be of the Church, where shall we find the least *Footsteps* of such a Profession? Where, so much as the *Form* or Appearance of *any Religion* at all? What *Master* calls his *Family* to *Morning* and *Evening Prayer*? instructs his Children and Servants in their Duty, or takes any Care at all of their immortal Souls, or indeed seems to think himself under any Obligation so to do? — If we attend them at their *Meals*, how few shall we hear sanctifying them with *Thanksgiving* and Prayer! *1 Tim. iv.* How banish'd is GRACE from almost every Table! or, where some Remains of it are left, 'tis mutter'd over with such Hurry or Indifference, or else committed to some Child, or Servant to perform, as if God were not worthy to be thanked for the Bread he bestows; or the *Master* or *Mistress* of the House were *too good* to pay him a decent and respectful Homage for the Necessaries and Comforts they enjoy by his Bounty.

Neglect of Family Prayer, and Instruction;

Of Grace at Meals.

Closet and Private Devotion.

And if this be our Practice in *common* and *publick* Life, what must we think of the more *re-*
tir'd Acts of Devotion, which our holy Religion requires of us, the *Duties of the Closet*? When, or how are these perform'd? — What may we judge of the Use of the *Means of Grace*, those Means especially by which we might recover ourselves, and propitiate our
offended God, *Secret Fastings*
Penitential Exercises. and *Mortifications*? — These, alas! these Acts and Exercises

of *Penitential Discipline* are grown not only into a strange *Disuse*, but into some Degree of Scorn amongst us. For any to set apart Days to *fast* and *pray*, and humble their Souls in secret before God, tho' they do it without Affectation, and in the Sincerity of their Hearts; yet, except they can contrive to *conceal* it from the Knowledge of others, they will but expose themselves to Reproach and Contempt, and be branded with the odious Character of *Papists*, or *Malecontents*, *Superstitious* or *Precise*, mere *Bigots* or brain-sick *Fools*.

Appointed Days of Abstinence.

From this unhappy Declension of *Private Devotion* proceeds the more notorious and scandalous Neglect of the *Vigils*, *Fasts*, and Times of *Abstinence* prescrib'd by our Church.
These

These are look'd upon as Works of mere Supererogation, if not a Tendency to fall off to another Church. So blindly prejudiced are some, as if the stricter and *higher* Sense we have of the Duty incumbent on us to fulfil *all Righteousness*, and pay a faithful and *uniform* Obedience to the Orders and Authority of our Holy Mother, *the Church of England*, were a Mark of our Dislike to, and forsaking her Communion.

“ The very *Notice* of our
 “ regular and appointed *Fasts*, Notice neglected to be given.
 “ however enjoyn'd publickly
 “ to be given, as the Days are at hand, as
 “ well as the Observation of them, has been
 “ neglected so long and so generally, that
 “ the *Institution* itself is, with the Multitude,
 “ grown into Contempt. So far has the
 “ Poison of the late *Innovating Factions* prevail'd,
 “ and still operates, that *Fastings* and
 “ *Mortification* are scarce now-adays look'd
 “ upon as any Part of *Christian Duty*; but
 “ rather all Appointments thereto, tho' commended
 “ by the Gospel, as well as enjoyn'd
 “ by the Church, are cry'd out against as
 “ Monckery, Will-worship, Bodily Exercise,
 “ and profiting nothing. Infomuch that
 “ Men, otherwise regular, have been, and
 “ daily are, hurry'd along in this licentious
 “ Stream to the violating and affronting that
 “ very Reformation, and that most excellent
 Con-

“ Constitution, which they themselves from
“ their Hearts approve and magnify.

Where should we end, were
Blemishes in our Clergy. we to enumerate all the particular
Violations of the Orders and In-
junctions of our Church? Is not our Case,
in many Instances, too much like that of
the *Jews, Like People, like Priest?* But as
we come not this Day with a *Pharisaical* Ar-
rogance to *justify*, but to *humble* and *condemn*
ourselves, and would gladly draw a Veil over
the Faults or Failings of our *Spiritual Fa-*
thers, let it suffice barely to name some of
those, which are too notorious to be hid, and
cannot but offend the Eyes of God, and of
all serious Christians, whose Sighs and Tears
they call for on this our Day of Trouble, and
of Rebuke, and of Humiliation; *viz.*

Neglect of Discipline, even of that which
is in Force.

Promiscuous Admissions to the Holy Com-
munion.

Unreasonable Pluralities.

Non-Residences.

Neglect of strict Conversation;

———of Visiting the Flock;

———of Conscientious Dealing with the
Sick;

———of Conferring with Recusants;

———of Catechising.

Unfruitful

Unfruitful Preaching, florid Discourses,
but without Unction, or Address to the
Conscience.

Reading Prayers and Lessons without due
Reverence, or Regard to Devotion or
Edification.

These, and whatever other Errors there
may be in the Conduct of our Clergy, we
mention them not by way of Reproach, but
with Sorrow and deep Concern, as Failings
that *should* be reform'd, and *cannot* be con-
ceal'd. And tho' to the Praise of God's
Grace, and the Honour of our Church and
Clergy in general, the worst of these Ble-
mishes are found comparatively but in few ;
yet, as they have been made the Subject of
Reproach by the Enemies of our Church,
and a *Stone of Stumbling* and *Rock of Offence*
to our weaker Brethren, we cannot omit them
in the black Catalogue of this

Day's Confessions. The Church
herself acknowledges a *Defect*
in her *Discipline*, and * *wishes*

Neglect of Ec-
clesiastical Di-
scipline.

it *might be restor'd*: To which all her faith-
ful Members say, *Amen*. And Oh ! that
those, whose Province and Duty it is to *re-*
store such old Godly Discipline, may at length
effect this our Church's WISH. But, alas !
in the mean time, while we complain that

* In the Communion Office.

the *antient* Discipline cannot take place, do we truly and effectually put in Execution such Discipline, and such Laws, as are *at present* in full Force? or has not rather a Slumber invaded those, who are to promote, and those who are to execute these Laws? Is not the most enormous *Corruption of Manners*, which overspreads the whole Nation, to be charg'd in a great Measure upon the *Remissness*, or *Abuse* of those Powers Ecclesiastical, wherewith some are intrusted? — “ The very
 “ practising of our own Rules might have
 “ prevented, and would still answer most of
 “ the Exceptions, that Men have rais'd against
 “ our Church. And as we are wanting to
 “ ourselves in our Vindication against our
 “ Adversaries in nothing more, than not
 “ keeping close to our own *Rubricks* and
 “ *Canons*; so the only sure and effectual
 “ Way of restoring our Virtue as *Men*, and
 “ true Piety as *Christians*, must be the re-
 “ storing of our Church's *Discipline*, and
 “ enforcing the Execution of her Laws, and
 “ the Laws of the Land, by which she is
 “ *establisb'd*.

Worldly Friend-
 ships, and Undue
 Compliances.

Leaving the Church as a
 Collective Body, proceed we
 next to examine still more par-
 ticularly *into the Lives* of her avow'd Mem-
 bers. And, 1. There are many who profess
 both a high Veneration for her, and great
 Love

Love for God, and perhaps are strictly observant of the outward Means of Grace, and the common Points of Discipline and good Order ; but in their general *Conversation* differ little or nothing from the People of the World ; yea, they contract and keep up *Friendships* and Intimacies with Persons of bad, or suspected Characters, either as to Virtue or Religion ; they joyn with them in the same Parties of Pleasure, the same idle Expences, vain Fashions, and vainer Diversions, even *Masquarades* and excessive *Gaming*, the very *Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World*, which they had solemnly renounc'd in their *Baptism*, and as often renounce again, as they come to the *Lord's Table*. — By this Means, to wit, a fair *outside* Shew of Religion on one hand, and most unjustifiable *Compliances* with the Enemies of it on the other, these *good* People do more Harm in the World, than the very *Atheists* and *Reprobates* ; while by their Countenance they encourage and confirm the *Wicked* in their Impieties, and beguile *unlearned and unstable* Souls by their unhappy and unguarded Examples, into the Broad-way that leadeth to Destruction. How would these cruel Effects of such a seemingly good-natur'd Complaisance, strike their Souls with Horror and Confusion, did they seriously lay these Things to Heart !

Party-Spirit.

Another sort of *Religious* Persons, who do much Hurt both to *Church* and *State*, are those who give themselves up to the Spirit of *Party*, on *either* Side the Question. Both *Extremes* are as distant from true Charity, as they are from each other: Truth here, as in the Case of all other *Extremes*, lies in the Middle: To exceed the due Bounds *on either hand*, betrays necessarily into Sin and Error. Let others dispute, *which* Extreme is the most *Criminal*; but the *Christian's* Duty is to avoid *both*: let him consider rather our *Lord's* Conduct with respect to *Cæsar*, and mind that sharp *Rebuke*, and wise *Advice*, he gave to *Peter*, when he meddled with *Politicks*, [asking, *WHEN the Kingdom should be RESTOR'D to Israel,*] *What is that to thee? follow thou me.* Did some, otherwise pious Men, consider how far their unhappy Conduct, in *thus* imitating of *Peter*, rather than following the wholesome *Counsel* and *Example* of their *Lord and Master*, has contributed to the greatest Evils, which our poor Church groans under, and *this Day* deplores, “ the Tears would run down their “ Cheeks as a River, they would not be comforted for the Hurt they have done to the “ Daughter of *Sion*, ” — tho’ not so design’d. — O that God may open their Eyes to see the *Mistake*, as well as Evil, of that Procedure, before it be too late!

From

From this general Description of our Manners, pass we on to the Examination of that *Internal* Virtue and Piety, which our Religion requires, and which constitutes the *true Israel* of God, that *Communion of Saints*, which we profess, and truly believe, to be in our Church. — *These*, we know, were ever a small *Flock*; for *Many are called, but Few are chosen*. But if this Flock were always *little*, even in Proportion to the nominal Professors of Christianity, much more in Comparison of the World, how very small is their Number *now*, in this *degenerate* Age, these *last Days* and *Dregs* of Time! — Where shall we find them? where shall we look for them? —

Internal Religion,

A *Communion* doubtless they are, as they have a Fellowship with God and each other, in all the *Essentials* of true Religion, being *One Body, and of One Spirit, having One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One GOD and Father of all*: But they are *Secret Ones*, not only as they are *Saints*, and so seen and *certainly* known to God only, and to their *good Shepherd the Lord Jesus*, John x. 14. but even as Members of our Church, and Professors of her Faith; they are so *secret*, as to be *scarce* visible, and *less* known. —

There may, we hope, be many *Thousands* in our *Israel*, who have not bowed the Knee to *Baal*; but by what *Marks* shall we discover

them? Where shall we find that *Essential* Character of a *burning and shining Light*, by which the Disciples of *Jesus* should be distinguish'd, more especially in these *Anti-christian* Days, to do Honour to God, and to justify the Truth and Power of his holy Religion? — Where is that other

and Christian
Fortitude.

Mark of a *holy Zeal* for the blessed Gospel of his Son, and that *earnest contending for the Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints?* — “ Search “ *Jerusalem* with Candles, and run to and “ fro thro’ the Streets thereof, and see now “ and know, and seek in the broad Places “ thereof, if ye can find a Man,” that has this true *Christian Fortitude*, that is valiant for the Truth, that has a *Zeal* in any Measure equal to the *Cause* we are to maintain, to the *Importance* of those Truths we believe, or even to that *wicked Industry*, wherewith our *Enemies* are indefatigably labouring to overthrow them. Alas! this pious Ardour, this holy Courage, is lost amongst us. We rather hide ourselves in Holes and Corners of the Earth, like the *Israelites* in the Days of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* xiii. We forsake the Fight, and turn ourselves back in the Day of Battle. — We weep (and weep we may) *in secret*, and mourn sore like Doves; but who has the Resolution to fight with this *Goliath*, to be the Lord’s Champion, “ to hazard their Lives unto the Death

“ Death in the high Places of the Field, to
 “ come forth to the Help of the Lord, to
 “ the Help of the Lord against the Mighty?

But have we not contended
 with the Enemy by Elaborate
 Writings, Learned Sermons, Ar-
 gute Disputations? — True: But what
 Ground has been *gain'd*? what *Impressions*
 made on the Enemy? yea, have we not ra-
 ther for some Years past, *lost Ground* conside-
 rably? — or were these the Means the
 Holy *Jesus* and his *Apostles* used, to prevail
 against the Prejudice of the *Jews*, and the
 Opposition of the whole *Gentile World*?
 Were these the *Weapons* by which the noble
 Army of *Martyrs* overcame? St. *Paul* tells us,
 it was *not*: --- He came, as he himself affirms,
 “ not with Excellency of Speech or of Wif-
 “ dom, when he declared the Testimony of
 “ God. — He determined not to know any
 “ Thing amongst them, save *JESUS CHRIST*,
 “ and him *CRUCIFIED*. His Speech and his
 “ Preaching was not with inticing Words of
 “ Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of
 “ the Spirit, and of Power.” — And else-
 where he saith of Himself, and the other
 Apostles, — “ Tho' we walk in the Flesh,
 “ we do not war after the Flesh; for the
 “ Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal,
 “ but mighty thro' God, to the pulling
 “ down of strong Holds, casting down Ima-
 “ ginations

Controversial
 Writings.

“ ginations and every high Thing that ex-
 “ alteth itself against the Knowledge of
 “ God, and bringing into Captivity every
 “ Thought to the Obedience of Christ.” —

These were the Methods us'd in *planting* Christianity; and such as these must certainly be the most proper for *restoring* it again. We say not this to condemn or depreciate the Works of any, who, in the Integrity of their Hearts, have employ'd their Talents in defending our common Faith. But, alas! this is not *sufficient*, and appears, by the Success, not to be the most *effectual* Way. To enter into a solemn Argument with an Atheist, is, in Effect, doing Honour to his Cause, and putting it on the same Level with the Truth. Gravely to sit down and confute the profane Scoffings, the horrid, but absurd, Railery of a notorious *Blasphemer* and professed *Infidel*; is it not giving that which is *Holy* unto *Dogs*? is it not casting our *Pearls* before *Swine*? And if they trample them under their Feet, *as they do*, and turn again and *rent us*, whom may we thank but ourselves?

“ But this is all that can be done; all that
 “ the Times will bear.” — God grant this may not be judg'd an *insufficient* Plea at the Great Day. — Is our Church quite *disarm'd* then? Has she *no* Weapons left but *Prayers* and *Tears*, to defend her? no *Arms* but the
 Pen

Pen and the *Tongue* to chastize withal? Is it the Iniquity of the Times, that has so banish'd all *Discipline*? or is it not rather the *Neglect* of Discipline, which has occasioned this deplorable *Iniquity of the Times*? What Contempt would our Penal and Municipal Laws sink into; how would Injustice, Murther, and the most flagrant Villanies abound in the State, should the *Civil* Sword sleep thus in the Sheath, and be laid aside? Or should the Judge on the Bench enter into a formal *Dispute* with every *Malefactor* to convince him of the Naughtiness and Injustice of his Actions, and make a grave Harangue on the Principles of Moral Good and Evil, suspending the Sentence, due by the Law to the Crime, to wait the Issue and Success of the Controversy; or *print* the learned Debate for the Use of the Publick?

But enough of this, and I fear too much; few being likely to reckon this Way of defending our Faith, among the *Faults* of our Church, much less as a Fault, which contributes to her *greater Danger*, and to increase the Divine Displeasure against her; and fewer still are those, who, tho' they call themselves her Friends, will yet be induc'd to mend this Fault, by attempting the Removal of the Cause in the more *proper* Manner, and laying the Ax to the *Root* of the Tree. — Such a Pass are we come to now, that

that not only *Christianity*, but the very first Principles of *all Religion* are call'd in question. — Now, if he who saith but in his Heart, *there is no God*, is a *Fool*, he that speaks it out, must be downright *mad*; and to argue with such, is no less weak, than (I had almost said) impious. For *God is Light*; and what Evidence can *Light* want, except itself, to prove its own Existence? All *may* see it, that have Eyes, and *will*; but 'tis impossible to convince the *real* and *wilfully* Blind. To *answer* such Fools *according to their Folly* (as the Wiseman advises) cannot be meant, to *reason* with them; for they cannot, or will not, understand. — How then? — Why, as he saith in the Verse immediately preceding, a *Whip for the Horse*, a *Bridle for the Ass*, and a *Rod for the Fool's Back*. To such Fools, I say, this would be the *proper* Answer,---from those, I mean, *who have Authority*, and bear not the *Rod* in vain. As to common People and others, it is their Wisdom, 1. Not to *listen* to, much less *go after* them. *Eve's* entring into a *Parley* with the Serpent, was half her Fall. — 2. Not to *read* any of their Books; no, nor the *Answers* to them. — He that can bear to read and consider an *Atheistical Argument*, what does he but taste the Poison, to try the fatal Experiment *upon himself*. It may cost him dear, if not well fortify'd with an Antidote. — Even he that reads the *Answers*, seems

to betray a kind of *Doubting*, which borders upon Infidelity. And if *Doubting* be damnable (see *Rom. xiv.*) to him that readeth *not of Faith*, *Curiosity* on the other hand is no less dangerous, because it is a *Tempting of God*. How much safer is it to take *Solomon's* Advice, when such impious Wretches, or their Writings, fall in our Way? *For sake the Foolish, and live, &c.* * or to follow the wise Example of the Primitive Christians, when urg'd by their Adversaries to dispute on the Mysteries of our Religion, their constant Answer was, [*Ἰσασιν οἱ Μεμευνημένοι,*] *the Initiated Know*: as much as to say, "We, and all serious Christians, *know* these Things to be true, because we *feel* them." Every sincere Proficient in Religion can experimentally say the same. — Such a one not only *tastes*, but *sees*, *how gracious the Lord is*, *Psal. xxxiv.* not only *believes*, but *knows* there is a God.

But to return; if every Member of our Church, who fears God, and *followeth after Righteousness*, takes off his Thoughts from the Consideration of other Mens Sins and Failings, and turns his Eyes *inward* upon Himself, to examine and observe the Plagues of his *own* Heart, the best of us will find Cause, more than sufficient, to look upon himself as accessory to the Judgments, which

Further View
of Internal Religion.

* *Prov. ix. 6, 7, 8.* See also *ch. iv. 14, 15.*

threaten this Church and Nation. Our Lord has assured us, that, *except our Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; and yet, if we compare our Righteousness, that is, our *Virtue*, with the *Morals* (1st.) of the antient *Heathens*; which of us all (I will not say, *exceeds*, but *comes up to* These, who had only the *Light of Reason* to guide them, in the common and social Duties of Life? Where is that *Generosity* of Soul, that *Magnanimity* of Mind, that *publick Spirit* and *Love of our Country*, that noble *Constancy* and faithful *Friendship*, that *Disdain* of *bodily Pleasures*, and *Contempt* of *Riches*; in a Word, that *Temperance*, and Mastery over our *Appetites* and *Passions*, which those *Heroes of Pagan Antiquity* were eminent for? If from these we pass (2dly.) to the *Christians* of the *Primitive Age*; how far *more short* are the greatest of our *Virtues*, if compar'd with theirs! Where is that *Faith*, that *overcometh the World*; that *Hope*, that *purifieth us*, even as *God is pure*; that *Charity* that *suffereth long*, and yet is *kind*; that *envieth not*, *vaunteth not itself*, is not *puffed up*, *seeketh not her own*, *thinketh no Evil*; that loves even her *Enemies*, and seeks the *Good of all*? Where is that *Zeal for God*, that *Love of JESUS*, that *Patience of the Saints*, that *Joy in Tribulation*, that *Heavenly-mindedness*,

edness, and Life of God? Where is that *Self-Denial, Mortification, and Love of the Cross*, which shone so bright in those antient Saints and Martyrs? Their Candle was not hid under a Bushel, but diffus'd its Light all around, not to their own Times only, but down to all succeeding Generations, even to these last and worst of Times.

Examine we next our Actions by the Catalogue of *deadly Sins*, and their opposite *Virtues*; who can say, he so eschews Evil, as to do only Good? who has so subdu'd the Vice of *Pride*, as to be thro'ly Master of *Humility*; so conquer'd *Envy*, as to be truly *Benevolent*; so *Bountiful*, as to have no Symptoms of *Covetousness*; so *Chaste*, as to be wholly *Pure* in Thought and Deed; so *Meek*, as never to be provok'd to immoderate *Anger*; so *Temperate*, as to have the *Appetites* in a constant Subjection; so *Diligent*, as to have no *idle* Hours to answer for? In a Word, who has yet attain'd to *Perfection*? or, which is worse, who is there that even *strives* to excel in Virtue?

Furthermore, if we bring our Lives to the Test of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, particularly the Beatitudes, wherewith it begins, and points out the Way to true Happiness; who is there so *poor in Spirit*? who so *mourns* for his spiritual Wants? so *meek*,

and Master of his Passions, so *hungers and thirsts* after Virtue and *Righteousness*? who so *merciful*, so *pure in Heart*, and such a Lover of *Peace*, that he can with Confidence and full Assurance of Hope, lay Claim to the *Blessings*, which Christ has annex'd to these holy Dispositions? Above all, who can submit to *Persecutions for Righteousness sake*, much less *rejoyce* and be *exceeding glad*, when they are reviled, and suffer all manner of Evil falsely for the Name of Christ? Where is this Heroick Spirit of *Martyrdom* to be found, which the Followers of Jesus were antiently so ready, and even ambitious to undergo? — The Cause is the same, the Reward the same, the divine Support and Blessing is the same: but we, alas! are not the same. A cowardly Fear damps the Courage, shuts the Mouths, and cools the Zeal of those, who ought to withstand the present Torrent of Infidelity, and boldly expose themselves, to whatever Danger may ensue.

Let such read what our Lord saith, *Mat. x. from ver. 24. to ver. 40.* and reflect on that *Wisdom of the Serpent*, which he recommends *ver. 16.* This Animal, in Time of Danger, exposes its *Body* to secure its *Head*, which is an Example to teach us, that we should defend our *Faith* at the Hazard of all Things else, our Bodies, Goods, &c. and to cover that Principle of our spiritual Life
against

against all Assaults and Temptations ; more especially to conserve and defend our Head, *Jesus Christ*, from the Assaults of every Enemy, whatever it may cost our Body. So St. *Jerome* expounds it, “ The *Serpent’s* “ Cunning is given us for an Example, be- “ cause it hides its Head with its whole “ Body, and protects that, which is the Seat “ of Life : So also ought we, at the Peril “ of our *Bodies*, to defend our *Head*, which “ is *Christ*.

To search still deeper into the State of our Souls ; — let us hear St. *Paul*, *If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. Rom. viii. 9. — Whether this imports that Temper and Disposition, which Christ display’d in the whole Tenor of his Life and Conversation, while he sojourned upon Earth, and set us a Pattern of the most perfect Obedience to the Divine Will ; or rather, by the *Spirit of Christ* we understand, the *Holy* and ever Blessed *Spirit* of God, by which we are sanctified and sealed unto the Day of Redemption. — If we have not this Divine Spirit, ’tis plainly told us, that we are *none of Christ’s*, none of *his Disciples*, no *true Christians*. — How solicitous then, how anxiously inquisitive ought we to be, whether we have *this* Spirit or no? — ’Tis a melancholy Remark, that very few, tho’ they pretend to be *Christians*, do yet so much

much as pretend to have *this Spirit*; they content themselves with the bare *Name* of Christians, tho' confessedly they want the *Principle*, which makes them to be so. Others again may presume they have this Spirit, when they have it not. But how shall we be assur'd, whether we have it or no? 'Tis, we know, made the Subject of a modern, and still subsisting Controversy, "Whether any
 " have, or ever had the Holy Ghost, but
 " such as be actually *inspired*;" nay, (among some of our own Divines) 'tis made a Question, whether *Reason*, the bare Light of Reason, is not as much as any Man can *now* pretend to; yea, that this is *sufficient* to conduct us in all our Disquisitions and Enquiries after Truth; and any higher Pretensions are treated with Contempt, as *Quakerism* or *Enthusiasm*: And yet an inspired Apostle hath said (as a Thing in *those Days* confessed, and well understood) *Know ye not that ye are the Temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* 1 Cor. iii. 16. — And again, *Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And S. John frequently appeals to this Internal *Experimental* Knowledge; *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God.* 1 John iv. 2. — Again, *Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error.* Ver. 6. — Again, *Hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts*
before

before him, ch. iii. 19. — Again, *Hereby know we, that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*, ch. iv. 13. — Again, *The Anointing, which ye have received of him*, [by which is understood the Gift of the Holy Ghost conferr'd in *Baptism*, and particularly in *Confirmation*, which from thence is sometimes call'd *Chrismation*] *abideth in you*; and ye need not that any Man teach you; but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all Things, and is Truth, and no Lye; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him, ch. ii. 27. The same is affirm'd in the 20th Verse, *Ye have an Unction from the Holy One, and ye know all Things*. The same Doctrine is repeated over and over again by the same Apostle in several other Places of this Epistle; but we shall conclude with that of St. Paul, Rom. viii. 16. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God; and if Children, then Heirs, &c.*

Now to know, whether we have ever receiv'd this Holy Spirit, and whether we have it still *abiding* with, and *dwelling* in us, there are these *two Rules*, which cannot well deceive us, but thro' our own Neglect: The *First* is, the Proper Means, whereby it is received: Next, the *Fruits*, or blessed Effects thereof, appearing in our Lives and Conversation.

1. The

i. The Means
of Grace.

i. The only *Proper Means* for receiving the Spirit, according to the Gospel Institution, is *Lawful Baptism*; for so, when the *Jews were pricked in their Hearts* for being accessory to the Death of Christ, and cried out, *What shall we do?* — Peter said unto them, *Repent and be Baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.* So that in *Baptism* the Holy Spirit is first receiv'd as a Principle of *Life*, giving Birth and Beginning to the *Spiritual Life*; hence St. Paul calls *Baptism the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. iii. 5. — In *Confirmation*, which is the Appendage and Completion of Baptism, a fuller Measure of the same Holy Spirit is given as a Principle of Action, and in a *seven-fold Degree*; viz. of *Wisdom*, to chuse aright; of *Understanding*, to apprehend our Duty; of *Counsel*, to give, or take Advice; of *Knowledge*, to see Divine Truths; of *Godliness*, to practise them; and lastly, of *Holiness*, to be thoroughly chang'd in the Spirit of our Mind, and the whole Temper of our Souls, and entirely conform'd to the *Divine Image*, wherein we were first created, and to which our Lord came, to restore, and create us again.

N. B.

N. B. [As to the other Sacrament; the *Lord's Supper* is more properly the *Food* of the Soul, to *preserve* the Spiritual Life, than to *give* it. It serves also to repair the Breaches, which Sin hath at any Time made in our Souls; to raise us to higher spiritual Perfection, and a greater Contempt of the World; in short, to be the Principle of a blessed Immortality to both our Bodies and Souls.]

These are the *Means*, the *undoubted Means*, by which the *Holy Ghost* is receiv'd, and to be receiv'd. — This then is a Question of infinite Importance; — “Have we us'd “these *Means*, or not?” — Have we “us'd them in the *Manner* appointed by “the Church?” And herein we cannot be mistaken, except we be wilfully blind.

As to the other Question,
 “Whether we have *still* the *Holy* ^{2. Fruits of the Spirit.}
 “*Ghost*,” the sure Way is to
 examine whether we have all, or any of those
Fruits, which spring from that Root, and
 grow upon the *Tree of Life*; that Tree,
 which is said to be planted *by the Side of the*
River, and *bears twelve manner of Fruits*,
 Rev. xxii. 2. (see also Ezek. xlvii.) Now
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the *River*, which is said to *proceed out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb*, is that *Baptism* we have been speaking of: The *Tree of Life* is the *Life of the Spirit*; and the *Twelve Fruits* it bears, are reckon'd up by Divines to be these following, — Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Mercy, Goodness, Long-suffering, Meekness, Faith, Modesty, Shamefacedness, Sobriety. Vide *Gal. v. &c.*

If we have these *Fruits* of the *HOLY GHOST*, these good Works, to shew, 'tis a most assured Sign that we have *Him*. — But then we must be sure that they grow on the *Tree of Life*, not of *Nature*; on the *Tree* planted *beside the pure Water of Life, clear as Crystal, issuing from the Throne of God*; *i. e.* by *Divine*, not *Human* Institution and Authority. This *Tree* must also bear *Fruit*, and not *Leaves only*. 'Tis the *Fruit*, by which the *Tree* is best known; and if indeed we have *them*, the World will see, and our Consciences will know, that we have indeed that *Holy Spirit*, from whence they derive their very Being, and their Virtue. — But if we have, or rather seem to have, these *Fruits* any *other way* than this, however fair they may appear to the Eye, they are of the *wild Kind*, they are not genuine, and of the right Sort; such they are, as God complains of, *Isa. v. He looked*

looked that it should bring forth Grapes, and it brought forth wild Grapes.

Another *Mark* and Criterion, by which Christians may judge of themselves and their *Spiritual State*, is that blessed Effect of Divine Grace, whereby *the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts*, Rom. v. 5. — This is what the World and worldly Persons know nothing of, not only because their foolish Hearts are darken'd by their Lusts and Passions, but they have not the proper *Organ* for such an Internal Relish of Divine Joy, that [*Ενυσνοια*, or] kind of Sixth Sense, whereby Heavenly Things are tasted and felt.

This therefore is a Mark to such only, as St. Paul speaks of, who have *their Senses exercised to discern Good and Evil*, Heb. v. 14. — But even here great Caution is necessary (and for the sake of such Caution, this Note is here hinted to Spiritual Persons) to wit, that they *try the Spirit*, that sometimes charms the Soul with a Torrent of Joy, and fills the Heart with such Extatick Sweets, as infinitely exceed all the Delights, or most Ravishing Sensations, which Nature ever felt. And the sure Way to

A Mark to Spiritual Persons only.

A Caution.

know if it be of the right Kind, not vain and illusive, but the genuine Operation of the *Spiritual Life*, and undoubted Influence of the *Divine Spirit*, is carefully to observe the *Effect* it has upon the Mind ; and particularly, whether such a Flow of inward Joy and Transport produces in the Heart, not only an inflam'd *Affection for God*, and *Desire of Heaven*, but (what is a surer Mark) a more rational and profound *Humility*. If such Spiritual Joys serve to *puff up* the Mind to *spiritual Pride*, they are either delusive, and from the *Evil One*, to *deceive* us ; or, if real Illapses from above, they are *perverted* and *misapplied*. The true *Joy of the Holy Ghost* is design'd, not only to give us, now and then, an Antepast of Heaven, that we may even *feel*, as well as *know* and *believe*, that there is a *GOD*, a *SAVIOUR*, a *COMFORTER* ; a Peace which passeth all Understanding, as superior to all Expression or Imagination of Man, as it is to every earthly Pleasure and the most exquisite Delights of Sense, and so confirm us in our Faith, and also support us in our Troubles ; but chiefly to *shew us to Ourselves*, by pouring in upon the Mind such an Influx of *Light*, as may at once discover to us all our *hidden Corruptions*, and the least *Blemish* that offends the Eye of our Heavenly Father ; that we may *thoroughly purge our Floor*, and reform every

every Thing that is amiss. Such an *Insight of Ourselves* by the Rays of heavenly Light, cannot, except we wilfully shut our Eyes, but make us cry out with *Job, Lord, I abhor myself and repent*; in a Word, cannot but make us *humble*.

To conclude; by these several *Marks* may the sincere Christian try and know his *Progress* in the Spiritual Life, and perceive how far he is *deficient* of that Standard of *Perfection*, to which we ought all to aspire. Let the *Infidel* sneer, and the proud *Pharisee* despise, what they have no Notion of, because they never *felt* these Things. It is an Axiom of the Wise Man, which they cannot gainsay, *the Heart knoweth his own Bitterness, and a Stranger doth not intermeddle with his Joy*, Prov. xiv. 10. — They may therefore as well tell a Man he does not know or perceive, when he *grieves* or *rejoices*, or whether he grieves or rejoices at all, as to say, these *sensible Comforts*, which good Men feel in the Exercises of true Religion, are not *real*, because they themselves never *felt* them. By the same Rule the best Problem in *Euclid* may be confuted, and prov'd to be false, by a Country *Clown*, that does not understand it. So all Sir *Isaac Newton's* fine Discoveries, and the sublimest Passages in the most celebrated Authors, exploded and ridiculed, be-
cause

cause every *Ignoramus* has not Sense enough to apprehend them. — Let such, if they are not *past feeling*, and incurably infatuated, read Bishop *Atterbury's* Discourse on that Text, — *The Scorners seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not*, before they set up for Judges of what they do not understand; and there they will see the Reason, *why* they are no wiser.

But let us, who have learned Christ, and so learned him, as to know assuredly the Truth and Certainty of these Things, wherein we have been instructed, pity and pray for those unhappy Wretches, who *know not God*, who are *without Christ*, being *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel*, and *Strangers from the Covenant of Promise*, having No Hope, *because they have No Faith*. — And for ourselves, imploring the Divine Grace, that we may *lift up the Hands that hang down*, and the *feeble Knees*, and make *strait Paths for our Feet*, lest that which is lame be *turned out of the Way*; that we being preserv'd from the contagious Influences of a most *Profane Age*, may hold fast our Faith without wavering; that our Hearts being establish'd by Grace, rooted in Faith, and grounded in Love, we may proceed from Strength to Strength; not only walking the more warily in these last and evil Days, but
with

with more Vigour, Undauntedness and Zeal in our Christian Profession; that so *the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord JESUS, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, may make us perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his Sight, through the same JESUS CHRIST, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen, Heb. xiii. 21.*

A P P E N D I X.

There are two Kinds of Persons will be disappointed by the Title of this Essay; the *Gay*, who expected Wit and Humour; and the *Malecontent*, whose Spleen can discern no Evil in the Times, but what are *Political*; nor any Corruption, but in his Governors. — 'Tis certain there never was more Work for a *Democritus*, and an *Heraclitus*, than now; never a larger Field for Satyr and Ridicule, if we look at the *Follies*; nor for Tears and Sorrow, if we observe the *Depravity* of the Age. — I have chosen the latter Province; let those, who have the Talent

Talent of *Wit* committed to them, take the other, and soundly lash all those, who deny *First Principles*, because, forsooth, they do not understand them. — They profess they do not understand, and yet set up for Judges: — They pretend to have more Understanding than any, yet scruple not to own they have *no Souls*; renouncing at once their Affinity to God, and the very Nature of Men (*for we are his Offspring*;) And can any Thing be a stronger Proof of their Folly and want of Understanding? Well may the Scripture pronounce them *Fools*, when they rank themselves with the *Beasts that perish*. — So groveling and absurd are their Notions, that the unhappy Author of the *Tale of a Tub* might here find a much more fruitful, as well as laudable Theme, for his Satyrical Wit, and make some Expiation for the profane Levity and Licentiousness of his Pen. — This would be the most effectual Way of confuting such Men. — This would indeed be answering such *Fools according to their Folly*. And God himself sets the Example, — *Surely he scorneth the Scorners*, Prov. iii. 34. — *He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in Derision*, Psal. ii. 4. — And O! that our Divines, instead of attempting by Reason to convince such Enemies of God and Man (which is a Thing impossible to be done, if
Scripture

Scripture and general Experience are to be believ'd) would turn their *Ax* from the Boughs and puny Suckers of this accursed Tree of Infidelity, and *lay it to the Root*, that is, the Sins and bad Lives of those, who are yet Believers, and profess, but practise not, the Rules of our holy Religion.—Alas, it is the Pride, the Intemperance, the Luxury and Vanity, the Covetousness and Worldliness of Christians, which have provoked God to let loose this evil Spirit of Atheism and Infidelity amongst us; this dreadful Pestilence, which spreads so fast, and slays its Thousands and ten Thousands in our Streets.—These Ungodly Men are but the *Swords* of him, *who hath made all things for himself; yea, even the Wicked for the Day of Evil.* (See *Psal.* xvii. 13. & *Prov.* xvi. 4.)—O that his Ministers would cry aloud, and spare not; blow the Trumpet in *Sion*, and sound an Alarm in the holy Mountain; an Alarm to a holy War against our Sins; an Alarm to Humiliation and Repentance; to Fasting, and to Weeping, and to Mourning; that so Iniquity may not be our Ruin.

And as for you, who are touch'd with a bleeding Sense of the horrible Impieties of the Age, and live in a fearful Expectation of Divine Judgments, *be not afraid, neither be ye dismay'd*: Next to the Comfort and

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Support

Support of your own Integrity, and the distinguishing Protection of Divine Mercy insur'd to you in the midst of Judgment (*Ezek. ix.*) there is another sure, tho' awful Consolation, which cannot fail; tho' the Prayers and Intercessions, the Fastings and Tears, should not prevail for a further Reprieve: and that is; this very Deluge of Infidelity will hasten on the faster the grand Catastrophe of the World, and the sooner put a Period to this wretched Scene of Sin and Misery. — To such Mourners belongs that Encouragement of our Lord, *Lift up your Heads, for your Redemption draweth nigh.* And if it be one Sign of his Coming, that no Faith will be *then* found upon the Earth, this Deliverance cannot, methinks, be far off. The very *Character of the Times* is a loud Prognostic of the *last Days* approaching; — we may even imagine the Judge at the Door, and that we hear him say, — *Behold, I come quickly.* To which, let every one, that keepeth the Sayings of the Prophecy of *his Book*, and grieves for the Crimes delineated in *this*, say *Amen*, — *Even so, Come, Lord Jesus*; most heartily joyning in that Collect in our Burial Service, “ That it may please God, of his
 “ most gracious Goodness, shortly to accom-
 “ plish the Number of his Elect, and to
 “ hasten his Kingdom, &c.

In the mean time, altho' nothing can contribute more to weaken the Hands, and slacken the Nerves of honest Industry, than the present Torrent and Overflowings of Ungodliness, with a continual Dread of impending Judgments, yet *let not your Hearts be troubled*, nor abate your wonted Diligence. It must needs be, that such Offences, and such Scoffers should come. 'Tis all foretold; and this Event, while it proves these to be the *last* and worst of Times, proves also the certain Truth and Divinity of those holy Writings, which these Scorners deny and blaspheme. — But let us pursue the Business of our respective Callings with a chearful Assiduity, as honest Men; with Duty and Submission to our Governors, as loyal Subjects; with Patience and Meekness, as good Christians: Bearing the Miseries of these evil Times, as expecting a speedy Release; neither deserting our Stations, as weary of Living; nor forsaking our God, as afraid of Dying. — Let the World see, by our Lives and Conversation, that there is in the Christian Religion a convictive Evidence, superior to all the false Reasonings, and perverse Disputings of Men; a divine Energy triumphing over all the insidious Baits, and *deceitful* Lusts, as well as Frowns and Terrors of a wicked World; a Beauty

and Excellence transcendently amiable, worthy of the good Profession we made before many Witnesses ; worthy of its Holy Founder, whose Name and Badge we wear. — Let us *contend earnestly for the Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints* ; but prove ourselves of the Number, rather by our Actions, than our Words. — Our Motto should be, *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus* ; and our Contention, not, who shall be the most subtil Disputer, but who the best Christian. — A holy Conversation is the best Advocate, as well as surest Sign of our Faith. — To argue for it, is well ; to die for it, is more ; but to live the Life of it, is the most irrefragable Proof. — This Faith, tho' planted by Miracles, tho' water'd by the Blood of Martyrs, ow'd its chief Increase to the incomparable Virtues and Holiness of its Professors. — The Piety of Saints contributed more, than even their Preaching and Sufferings, to the Conversion of the World. — Ours will do so too, if *thus* we adorn our Profession : If thus we strive for the Faith, we shall at once prove the Truth of the Gospel, and put to Silence the Gain-sayings of unreasonable Men. — This blessed Contention, this holy Confederacy and Combination, let us all unanimously enter into against *Atheism* and *Infidelity* ; and this, without any other Effort, will scatter these
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dark Mists of Error and Profaneness, as the Rising Sun dispels the Shades of Night by the immediate Splendor of his Beams. — Let us also contend, by a holy Emulation, to provoke one another to Love and to good Works: It well becomes the Competitors for so rich a Prize, to strive who shall excel. In the Ways of Perfection we should rival the Patriarchs, contend with the blessed Apostles, imitate to our utmost the Immaculate Jesus; yea, as far as possible, be holy, as God is holy: — Against Hope striving in Hope, even there to be most like, where we never can hope to be equal.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

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